

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Cosponsor HR 759:

The Climate Stewardship Act

February 14, 2005

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to ask you to join us in cosponsoring the Climate Stewardship Act, HR 759. This bipartisan legislation represents a balanced, market-based strategy that combines reasonable limits on global warming with an emissions trading mechanism that is already highly successful at lowering costs for acid rain reduction. The Climate Stewardship Act has won support from industry, environmentalists, farm groups, and economists. Similar legislation has also been introduced by Senators McCain and Lieberman, mirroring Phase I of their bill in the 108th Congress--it received a strong 43% vote in the Senate last year.

Specifically, the Climate Stewardship Act would:

- Limit the combined global warming emissions of major polluters in the electricity, industrial, commercial, and transportation supply sectors at 2000 levels by 2010. Agriculture, households, and small emitters would be exempt from the caps, but agriculture and forest industries could sell sequestration credits.
- Create a trading market for allowances to emit global warming gases, harnessing market forces to locate the most cost-effective ways to reduce greenhouse gases and creating positive incentives for steps such as storing more carbon in farm soils and improving fuel economy in cars.
- Fund transition assistance--at no cost to the federal treasury--for workers, industries and consumers.

The time to act is now! CO2 lingers in the atmosphere for more than 100 years, so delay in reducing emissions will mean deeper, more rapid, and far costlier cuts in the future, which may by then be less effective in mitigating global warming impacts on our coasts, farms, human health, and environment.

The need to address human-induced emissions is real. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2001 that, "There is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the past 50 years is attributable to human activities." A National Academy of Sciences study that same year supported this finding, stating that, "The IPCC's conclusion that most of the observed warming of the last 50 years is likely to have been due to the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations accurately reflects the current thinking of the scientific community."

The US government's Climate Action Report of 2002 detailed likely future impacts from global warming across our nation, including:

- Increased risk of storm damage and erosion to coastal communities, such as in the Southeast;
- Declining lake levels in the Great Lakes region;
- More frequent and intense droughts in parts of the Great Plains;
- Changes in distribution of human and animal disease; and
- Decreased snowpack in the West, with costly impacts on water supply.

As the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the United States can and must act to slow global climate change. The Climate Stewardship Act, with the support of industry experts and environmentalists, is an opportunity to address a problem none of us can afford to ignore.

To join us in cosponsoring this legislation or for more information, please contact us directly or have your staff contact Edith Thompson in Rep. Gilchrest's office (5-5311) or Abbie Meador in Rep. Oliver's office (5-5335).

Sincerely,


Rep. Wayne Gilchrest


Rep. John Oliver


Rep. Christopher Shays


Rep. Chris Van Hollen